THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b). Does not arise.

[Translation]

Duty Free Import of Newsprint

4896 SHRI MAHENDRA KUMAR SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to allow duty-free import of newsprint inspite of its availability in adequate quantity with the paper mils in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the extent to which it is likely to affect our foreign exchange reserves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). Indigenous production of newsprint is not adequate to meet the domistic requirements. In view of this, import of newsprint is allowed to fill in the gap between demand and supply. In order to ensure adequate supply at reasonable rates, its import has been exempted from payment of coustoms duty and the indigenous production exempted from excise duty.

[English]

Abolition of Posts

4897. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether circulars have been issued to the offices under different Ministries for abolition of posts at various levels; and

(b) if so, the details of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): (a) and (b). Ministries/Departments of the Governmei of India have been asked to conduct a review and Secretariat as well as in the field formations including the autonomous bodies etc. under their control that could be considered for surrender/abolition.

[Translation]

Tea Production

4898 SHRI JAGMIT SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMECE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is the largest producer of tea in the world;

(b) whether the tea production is increasing continuously in the country;

(c) if so, the increase in tea production during 1991-92 in comparison to the production in Ist year;

(d) the target fixed for tea production during 1992-93;

(e) whether the Government have prepared any scheme to provide special facilities for encouraging tea industry to achieve the target; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) the production of tea in India during April, 1991-January, 1992 is estimated at 696.49 Million kgs. as against 677.49 M.Kgs. during the same period last year.

(d) 765 Million kgs (Provisional)